

THE EMERGENCE OF THE BAGRATUNI KINGDOMS OF KARS AND ANI

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Historical Overview

Before examining the relationship between successive—and sometimes concurrent—Bagratuni kings and the twin sites of Kars and Ani in the tenth century, it is worth establishing the circumstances under which the royal title reappeared in Armenia after a hiatus of more than four centuries. During the course of the ninth century, Armenia was an integral part of the provincial structure of the Islamic caliphate.¹ Indeed there was a distinct province known as Arminiya, comprising much of Armenia as well as the eastern part of Iberia and Caucasian Albania. The governor of Arminiya was titled ostikan and resided in Bardha'a, although he appointed his own representatives to administer Armenia through the city of Dvin, collecting and remitting taxes. Armenia occupied a special place within that provincial structure by virtue of the fact that the traditional pattern of local Armenian lordship had not been

¹ For an introduction to ninth-century Armenia, see Joseph Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886* (New ed. by Marius Canard) (Lisbonne: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1980); René Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071* (Paris: Payot, 1947), pp. 341-97. For a most perceptive narrative, see Nina G. Garsoïan's two chapters, "The Arab Invasions and the Rise of the Bagratuni" and "The Independent Kingdoms of Medieval Armenia," in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 1: *The Dynastic Periods* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 117-85. For recent studies, see Tim Greenwood, "Armenian Neighbours," in Jonathan Shepard, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 333-64; Nina G. Garsoïan and Jean-Michel Thierry, "L'indépendance retrouvée: Royaume du nord et royaume du sud (IX^e-XI^e siècle), in Gérard Dédéyan, ed., *Histoire du peuple arménien* (Paris: Éditions Privat, 2008), pp. 243-96.

broken up in the aftermath of the conquest period but had survived largely intact. Armenian princes continued to vie with one another for the control of individual districts and larger blocs of territory, retaining their own military contingents and fortified strongholds for these purposes. Armenian princes therefore maintained forces that were, to all intents and purposes, independent of direct caliphal authority, and as such, constituted a potential threat to that authority. That threat was realized in the well-known rebellions of 774-75 and 850.² According to the Armenian sources, both were sparked by the activities of Arab tax collectors, suggesting that it was the means of collection as much as the level of assessment to which the Armenian princes objected. As the Arab historian al-Baladhuri noted, Armenian princes continued to occupy their lands, "each trying to protect his own region," and would test any newly-arrived amil or tax collector to discover whether he had sufficient military backing to enforce payment and hence their submission.³ It is striking that both revolts developed out of local Armenian grievances and were not provoked or supported by outside powers.

This picture changed radically after the murder of the caliph al-Mutawakkil in 861. To a weakened caliphate, loyal Armenian princes were needed to shore up the frontier against anticipated Byzantine attack across the Euphrates; at the same time they could provide an inexpensive counterbalance to the ambitions of independently-minded emirs elsewhere in the Caucasus. From an Armenian perspective, this was a time of consolidation and reconstruction following the devastat-

² For the first rebellion, see Ghevond, *Patmutiun Ghevondeay Metsi Vardapeti Hayots* [History of Ghevond, Great Vardapet of Armenia], ed. Karapet Ezian (St. Petersburg: I.N. Skorokhodov, 1887), pp. 137-53; trans. Zaven Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond, The Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians* (Wynnewood, PA: St. Sahag and St. Mesrop Armenian Church, 1982), pp. 129-39. For the second rebellion, see Hovhannes Draskhanakertsi/John Catholicos, *Patmutiun Hayots*, ed. Mkrtich Hovsep Emin (Moscow: 1853; repr. Tiflis: 1912; repr. Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1980), pp. 117-35; trans. Krikor H. Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Drasxanakerte'i, History of Armenia* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 118-26; and Tovma (Thomas) Artsruni, *Tovmayi Vardapeti Artsrunvoy Patmutiun Tann Artsruniats* [History of the House of Artsrunik], ed. Karapet Patkanian/Kerope Patkanov (St. Petersburg: I.N. Skorokhodov, 1887; repr. Tiflis 1917; Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1991), pp. 106-210; trans. Robert W. Thomson, *History of the House of Artsrunik* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985).

³ Al-Baladhuri, *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, ed. Michael J. de Goeje (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1866), p. 210; trans. Philip K. Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, vol. 1 (New York: Longmans, Green, 1916), p. 330.

ing reprisals carried out by Bugha after the revolt of 850. Having taken refuge in Tayk, Ashot Bagratuni in particular was well-placed to recover the political preeminence enjoyed by his father, the *sparapet* Smbat, who had died in exile in Samarra.⁴ Unlike those princes who returned from Samarra, the charge of apostasy could not be leveled at him. More important, he did not face any obvious challenge from within the Bagratuni house (*tun*). By contrast both the Artsruni and Siuni houses were divided between two or more branches and the Artsruni rivalries in particular were bitter and protracted.⁵ Thus, it should come as no surprise to discover that in 862 Ashot was invested with the title "prince of princes" by the ostikan 'Ali ibn Yahya al-Armani at the command of the caliph. Our principal source for this event, the early tenth-century *History of Armenia (Patmutiun Hayots)* composed by John Catholicos (Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi), adds that Ashot was also invested with "many clothes and royal honors" and that "he became first among all the nobility of Armenia and everyone established agreements with him as if truly with royal stock."⁶ It is tempting to interpret these comments as prefiguring John's description of the coronation of Ashot as king in 884. The historian appears to have been eager to ascribe all of the attributes of royalty to Ashot in 862 short of naming him as king. In my view, these two passages reveal as much about the writer's enthusiasm for Armenian kingship as they do about the reality of Ashot's political authority.

In 884, apparently at the suggestion of the princes and nobles of Armenia, Ashot was further rewarded by the caliph al-Mutamid with a "royal crown," brought to him by the ostikan Isa ibn Shaikh ibn Khalid.⁷ On August 26, 884 he was anointed by Catholicos Gevorg and crowned king of the Askenazian people (Askenaz being the brother of Torgom and hence the uncle of the eponymous Hayk).⁸ The historian

⁴ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, pp. 127-30; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 123-24.

⁵ For a useful summary of these internal rivalries, see Bernadette Martin-Hisard, "Constantinople et les Archontes du Monde Caucasiens dans le Livre des Cérémonies, II, 48," in Gilbert Dagron, ed., *Travaux et Mémoires* 13 (Paris: de Boccard, 2000), pp. 383-87 for Artsruni, and pp. 400-04 for Siuni.

⁶ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 133; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 125-26. The above is my own, slightly different translation, as are all subsequent quotations from this text.

⁷ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, pp. 138-39; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 128.

⁸ Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 272-73. He notes that a colophon dated 333 of the Armenian era (equivalent to 884 AD) gives the date of Ashot's coronation as Wednesday, August 26. This colophon can be found in Artashes Matevosyan, *Hayeren dzera-*

John Catholicos represents his elevation to the rank of king in terms of a restoration of the kingdom of Armenia, borrowing heavily from Movses Khorenatsi's description of the achievements of the first Arshakuni king of Armenia Vagharshak.⁹ There can be little doubt that the title was intended to reflect Ashot's preeminent position within Armenia, nor that the outward ceremony had a great impact upon his contemporaries, enhancing his prestige still further. However the political consequences of his coronation are harder to detect. There is no evidence to suggest that the elevation of Ashot to the rank of king was accompanied by the acquisition of new royal prerogatives through which to govern his kingdom. As Garsoïan has observed, Ashot "struck no coinage of his own and remained tributary to the caliphate."¹⁰ Equally there was no royal monopoly over the possession and construction of fortifications, the leadership of military forces or the resolution of disputes. Instead, his coronation was understood by contemporary writers primarily in terms of its religious significance. The Old Testament made it very clear that the office of king had been ordained by God for the political leadership of his people on earth.¹¹ Thus, Ashot's coronation was interpreted as a reestablishment of right relationship between God and his people, ushering in a new era of peace and prosperity.¹²

When Ashot died in 890, he was still the only king in Armenia; indeed even the contemporary historian of the Artsrunik house, Thomas Artsruni, was happy to title him "the king of Armenia."¹³ However it is clear that his elevation awakened similar ambitions within other Armenian princely families. At the death of Ashot Artsruni, prince of Vaspurakan, in November 903, his surviving brothers Gagik and Gurgen

greri hishatakaranner V-XII dd. [Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. 5th-12th Centuries] (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1988), pp. 38-39.

⁹ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, pp. 139-41; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 128-29, 273. Movses Khorenatsi, *Patmutiun Hayots* [History of Armenia], eds. Manuk Abeghian and Set Harutiunian (Tiflis: Mnatsakan Martirosiants, 1913; repr. Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1981), pp. 107-12; trans. and comm. Robert W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i: History of the Armenians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), II. 5-7 (pp. 134-39).

¹⁰ Garsoïan, "Independent Kingdoms," p. 148.

¹¹ 1 Samuel 8-9.

¹² Intriguingly, his royal title does not seem to have registered in contemporary records and sources outside Armenia.

¹³ Tovma Artsruni, *Patmutiun Tann Artsruniats*, p. 228; Thomson, *Artsrunik'*, p. 291 and note 9.

were described by Thomas Artsruni as “born of the same father and mother, descended from the noble and high-ranking stocks of Senekerim and David.”¹⁴ In other words, they claimed royal descent from the king of Assyria, Senekerim, through their father and from the king of Israel, David, through their mother, Sopi Bagratuni, although they did not go so far as to claim that they were themselves kings. By the time that Ashot I Bagratuni’s son, Smbat I, was martyred, either in 912-13 or 914, at least one rival king had already emerged. The same Gagik Artsruni, prince of Vaspurakan, was appointed king in 908, receiving a royal crown and royal honors and gifts from the ostikan Yusuf ibn Abul Sadj.¹⁵

The years after King Smbat’s martyrdom witnessed a further development, as his son and his nephew, both confusingly called Ashot, contested the political headship of the Bagratuni house and control of the districts of Ayrarat. Both are described by John Catholicos as king. Ashot, son of King Smbat, was given royal honors by the Byzantine emperor, treated “like a royal scion” and designated “almost equal to the emperor”; however, it seems clear that he was only crowned king by Atrnerseh, king of Virk/Iberia.¹⁶ Ashot, son of Sparapet Shapuh, was crowned by the ostikan Yusuf.¹⁷ Writing in 923, John lamented this development, blaming it for the contemporary disaster and devastation. In the preface to his *History*, when summarizing its content, he wrote: “And how after the death of King Smbat, these three are kings at the same time: Gagik Artsruni and Ashot son of Smbat and his namesake [in other words a second Ashot], son of Sparapet Shapuh, rivals with one another . . . and how from the hostility of the three named kings, wicked deeds and trembling and shakings and devastating tumults were provoked as well as unworthy deeds and strange destruction and fear of death.”¹⁸ In other words, the ideal of a single Armenian king, as understood by the Catholicos, did not last even two generations. Not only had the leading prince of the rival Artsruni fam-

¹⁴ Tovma Artsruni, *Patmutiun Tann Artsruniats*, p. 251; Thomson, *Artsrunik*, p. 313.

¹⁵ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 209; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 163.

¹⁶ For the royal honors from the emperor, see Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 285; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 198. For the Iberian coronation, see Draskhanakerttsi, p. 245; Maksoudian, p. 179.

¹⁷ For the coronation of Ashot sparapet, son of Shapuh, see Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 293; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 202.

¹⁸ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 8; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 65.

ily received the right to use the royal title, but the two rival Bagratuni princes had both obtained the title for themselves, albeit from different sources. The emergence of several concurrent Bagratuni kings in the second half of the tenth century needs to be placed in the context of this earlier fission.

How do Kars and Ani fit into this historical overview? Neither is mentioned explicitly in connection with Ashot I Bagratuni. Instead, Ashot is most closely identified with the town or settlement (*avan*) of Bagaran, south of Ani and southeast of Kars. Bagaran is described by John Catholicos as the seat of the king (*tagavoranist*), and he tells us that Ashot I was buried here.¹⁹ However, it is also clear that by 890 Kars was one of the principal Bagratuni fortresses. According to John Catholicos, in the struggle for succession in that year between King Ashot's brother, the sparapet of Armenia Abas, and Ashot's son, Smbat, Kars was the stronghold of Abas. He imprisoned one of Smbat's supporters there and later retreated into it when attacked by Smbat.²⁰ John also states that when Smbat first heard about his father's death, he set out and went to his own estate (*sepakan kalvats*) at Erazgavork/Shirakavan.²¹ In other words, Smbat had a prior interest in that site, presumably granted by his father. This would explain why he subsequently chose to live and found a church at Shirakavan, located according to John Catholicos near to his royal palace.²² His choice of Shirakavan was dictated by his association with the site before he became king. Moreover, he treated Shirakavan as his principal base throughout his reign, using it as his winter quarters as late as 910.²³

Having observed Smbat's preference for Shirakavan, it is worth noting that Smbat also exercised direct control over both the fortress of Kars and the fortress of Ani. According to John Catholicos, when the Sadjid ostikan Apshin captured the fortress of Kars in around 895, he seized Smbat's wife, the wife of one of Smbat's sons, and the wives of many other nobles, as well as the king's treasury.²⁴ Evidently, Smbat had sought to use Kars as a refuge for his immediate family and pos-

¹⁹ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 143; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 130. For a map, see Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), map 91.

²⁰ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, pp. 144-46; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 131-32.

²¹ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 144; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 131.

²² Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, pp. 183-84; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 150.

²³ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 197; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 157.

²⁴ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, pp. 178-79; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 148.

sessions. There is one important piece of evidence found in a Greek text indicating that at some time Smbat may have used the fortress of Kars on a more permanent basis; that source describes the “prince of princes” as being settled in the *kastron* or fortress of Kars.²⁵ Frustratingly, the reference does not name the prince of princes, nor does it include a date. Its context suggests that it is either Ashot I or Smbat but on the basis of his known association with the site, Smbat should be preferred. Moreover, since this text was put together in about 952, there remains the possibility that it could be reflecting the contemporary situation, when Abas I was based there.

The role of Ani at the start of the tenth century is less prominent than one might have expected. John Catholicos reports that Smbat imprisoned at least one opponent in the fortress of Ani in about 904, and that when it fell to Armenian rebels in 907, they seized great riches from it, presumably belonging to Smbat.²⁶ The defensive potential of the site had long been recognized and had been exploited by the Kam-sarakan house in the seventh century. Nevertheless at the start of the tenth century, it is clear that Kars and Ani were already important centers of Bagratuni power. They are described repeatedly as *berdk*, fortresses, stressing their military character and role. This is the only context in which they appear in the written sources. They are never described as either a town or a city (*avan* or *kaghak*), both of which imply a larger settlement. There is nothing to suggest that they were substantial urban or mercantile centers at this time.

John Catholicos does not refer again to either Kars or Ani following the execution of Smbat I Bagratuni in 914, and it is left unsaid whether they were controlled by Smbat’s son, Ashot Erkat (Iron), or his namesake and cousin, Ashot Sparapet.²⁷ However, there seems little doubt that Bagaran, the principal center of King Ashot I, was firmly under the control of Ashot Sparapet. John Catholicos states that the sparapet founded one church in Bagaran, and a second at Koghb, a short dis-

²⁵ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. Romilly J.H. Jenkins (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), ch. 44, lines 13-16.

²⁶ For the imprisonment of Constantine king of Eger, see Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 201; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 159. For the sack of Ani, see Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, pp. 206-08; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 161-62.

²⁷ The epithet Erkat is not applied to Ashot by John Catholicos; instead, he prefers to use “son of the king” to distinguish him from his cousin.

tance to the south.²⁸ Immediately before this passage John notes that Ashot Sparapet's father Shapuh was buried in Bagaran (after 903, before 909), although this is perhaps unremarkable, given that Shapuh's father, King Ashot I, had also been buried there. More surprising, however, is the later passage in which John reports that Ashot Sparapet also arranged for the burial of one of his cousins, Mushegh, at Bagaran.²⁹ This is unexpected because Mushegh's father, King Smbat I, was still very much alive at this time (910). It becomes more understandable when one recalls the circumstances of Mushegh's death. He died from injuries sustained when in the custody of the ostikan Yusuf. Mushegh had been captured in battle while leading his father's armed resistance against the ostikan. By contrast, Ashot Sparapet had submitted to the ostikan by this time; he was thus in a much better position to claim his cousin's body for burial.

John Catholicos supplies one further piece of evidence relevant to the rivalry between the cousins. He records that in 923 he was himself forced to seek the protection of the sparapet. He evaded the clutches of Nasr al-Subuki, recently appointed ostikan of Armenia by Yusuf, escaping from his own small fortress at Biurakan and traveling to the royal palace (*arkunakan aparansn*), at Bagaran, to "the one who had become king," namely Ashot Sparapet.³⁰ This indicates that Ashot was based in Bagaran from the time of his father Shapuh's death until at least 923 and that his territorial interests were clustered around this avan. By extension, it seems more probable that the area under Ashot Erkat's control lay further north. The pattern of his campaigns supports this contention because they reveal that his territorial ambitions lay towards the north and east of Ayrarat, in Gugark and Uti. John Catholicos lends further weight to this proposition, albeit indirectly. He records that when Ashot Erkat wished to attack his cousin, he did so by advancing to Vagharshapat and Dvin.³¹ Again, this implies the southern orientation of the lands under Ashot Sparapet as well as giving some indication of the approximate boundary between the two of them. It follows from this analysis that Ani and Kars lay within the regions con-

²⁸ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 194; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 155-56.

²⁹ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 225; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 170.

³⁰ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 340; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 224. Ashot sparapet died in 936 after a remarkable thirty-year career. His longevity attests his considerable political skills and intimates that he played a far more significant role in the complex history of the period than the surviving sources recall.

³¹ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 298; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, pp. 204-05.

trolled by Ashot Erkat and/or his brother Abas. It should be stressed that very little is known about this period of their history.³²

Unfortunately, the picture does not become much clearer after the death of Ashot Erkat in 928/29. The dearth of contemporary written sources means that it is only through the early eleventh-century Armenian historian Stephen of Taron (Stepanos Taronetsi) that one learns about the construction of the cathedral in Kars by Abas.³³ As noted, successive Bagratuni kings and princes tended to settle and found churches in their own particular centers and Abas' conduct is consistent with this pattern. The argument that Kars was the principal stronghold of Abas is supported by his decision to convey a captured prince of Abasgia Ber from the battlefield to Kars, thereby enabling him to look upon its cathedral before being blinded.³⁴ This public humiliation would have had greatest impact if performed at the ceremonial center of his dominions. Even if this story contains fictitious elements, it confirms the primary significance of Kars for Abas. Intriguingly, Stephen of Taron portrays the episode primarily in terms of the contemporary ecclesiastical confrontation over the status of the Council of Chalcedon and specifically the consecration of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kars. This reflects something of the contemporary debate then raging within Armenia between those in favor of closer ties with the Greek

³² Stephen of Taron notes in passing that Abas married into an Iberian princely family. See Stepanos Taronetsi, *Stepanosi Taronetsvoy Patmutiun Tiezerakan* [Universal History of Stepanos (Stephen) of Taron], ed. Stepan Malkhasiants (St. Petersburg: I.N. Skorokhodov, 1885), p. 169; trans. Frédéric Macler, *Etienne Asotik de Taron. Histoire Universelle* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1917), pt. III, p. 23. Other sources state that he married one of the daughters of Gurgén the Great, prince of Kouel/Qveli, *magister* from 923 and named *eristavi eristavta* in Georgian sources, who later seized Achara and the valuable city of Ardanudj. See Martin-Hisard, "Archontes," pp. 444-45. Abas' Iberian connections may also have dictated his choice of Kars, adjacent to Iberian territory. The final reference to Abas in the *History* of John Catholicos presents him acting with Ashot sparapet in support of his father-in-law Gurgén against the latter's uncle, Atrnerseh, king of Iberia and *curopalate* and his ally Ashot Erkat. See Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 309; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 209. In other words, the two brothers were on opposite sides in this dispute. This shows that Abas was operating against his brother as early as 919. Although the likelihood of a later reconciliation cannot be ruled out, this episode confirms that Abas' association with Kars could have occurred independently of his brother's authority and that it may predate his death.

³³ Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 172; Macler, *Etienne Asotik de Taron*, pp. 26-27.

³⁴ Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, pp. 171-73; Macler, *Etienne Asotik de Taron*, pp. 27-28.

Church and those fiercely opposed to any accommodation, and by extension the particular concerns and perceptions of the author. Nevertheless, it is frustrating that nothing more is known about the development of Kars and the history of Ani in this period.

Up to this point, the surviving evidence suggests that Kars was recognized as the more important of the two fortresses. It is certainly more prominent in the sources. However, their relative positions reversed during the reign of Ashot III (952/53-77). On being crowned by Catholicos Anania Mokatsi in Ani in 961, Ashot III granted Kars together with the surrounding district of Vanand and eight other districts to his brother Mushegh.³⁵ From this moment on, it is Ani that is afforded priority within the Bagratuni polity. This can be traced not only in the subsequent development of both sites but also in the titles accorded to the respective Bagratuni kings. Ashot III is both king of Armenia and *shahanshah*, a title of Persian origin meaning “king of kings” and first applied to Ashot Erkat following his reconciliation with the ostikan Subuki in 919.³⁶ Ashot III is referred to as *shahanshah* not only by Stephen of Taron but also in a letter addressed to him by the Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes in 974.³⁷ His son and successor Smbat II was similarly titled both king of Armenia and *shahanshah*; an inscription inside the church at Aruch dated to 987 refers to Smbat *shahanshah*, son of Ashot *shahanshah*.³⁸ Finally, King Gagik I also held both titles, as attested in the numerous inscriptions dating from his reign.³⁹ The

³⁵ Garsoïan, “Independent Kingdoms,” p. 166. Traditionally, the coronation is dated to the year 961, on the basis of the account supplied by the twelfth-century Armenian historian Matthew of Edessa: *Patmutiun Matteosi Urhayetsvoy* [History of Matthew of Edessa] (Jerusalem: Saint James Press, 1869), p. 3; trans. Ara E. Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), p. 20. Although Matthew provides a very specific Armenian era date for this event, 410 [961/62], both his narrative and his chronology are very muddled at the beginning of his composition and there is good reason to treat his account with caution. However this date has become fixed in the secondary literature.

³⁶ Draskhanakerttsi, *Patmutiun*, p. 315; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs*, p. 212.

³⁷ Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 180; Macler, *Etienne Asotik de Taron*, p. 39; Matthew of Edessa, *Patmutiun*, pp. 23-32; Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades*, pp. 29-33.

³⁸ Ghevond Alishan, *Ayrarat* (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1890), p. 144.

³⁹ For example, the cathedral church of queen Katranide at Ani, dated 1001, discussed by Christina Maranci in this volume, bears a foundation inscription on its southern face which refers to “the glorious kingship of Gagik *shahanshah* of Armenia and Iberia.” See Hakob Orbeli, *Divan hay vimagrutyun* [Corpus of Armenian Inscript-

wide-ranging claims to sovereignty inherent in these two titles can be usefully contrasted with the limited aspirations of the royal titles associated with Kars. Stephen of Taron describes Mushegh as king of Kars and his son and successor Abas is both king of Kars and king of Vanand.⁴⁰ These are very narrow terms, expressing kingship in terms of a single location or single district. Contemporaries undoubtedly appreciated the distinction. Although the title of this study refers to the kingdom of Ani, the term is a modern construct devised to avoid confusion when discussing a particular king. Contemporaries did not use it, preferring to identify the king in Ani as the king of Armenia and shahanshah. To this end, the use of the title shahanshah appears to be deliberate, expressing a superior kingship while simultaneously allowing for the existence of lesser kings. In the light of the emergence of the kingdoms of Kars, and later of Tashir/Lori, its use seems particularly appropriate, implying that the original meaning of shahanshah, "king of kings," was still understood.⁴¹

Two final points need to be addressed in this historical overview. The first has been mentioned above, namely the development of these two sites from mere fortresses into larger settlements. Kars is described as a city (*kaghak*), for the first time by Stephen of Taron in the reign of Abas and thereafter is consistently described in these terms.⁴² Indeed at the death of Mushegh in 984, it is even called *mayrakaghak* by

tions], vol. 1 (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1966), no. 101, pl. XIII. The Iberian claim is striking.

⁴⁰ For Mushegh, see Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, pp. 180, 196; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, pp. 39, 67; For Abas, Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, pp. 196, 252, 270; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, pp. 67, 135, 157.

⁴¹ In support of this, the tenth-century Arab geographer Ibn Hawqal refers to the use of Persian within Armenia: "La langue de la population de l'Azerbaïdjan et de la majorité des habitants de l'Arménie est le persan qui sert de langue commune . . . quelques groupes des frontières de l'Arménie et des régions qui offrent avec elle des similitudes, parlent d'autres langues. C'est le cas de l'arménien pour les populations de Dabil, de Nashawa et des alentours, tandis que la population de Bardha'a s'exprime en arranien." See Ibn Hawqal, *Opus geographicum*, ed. Johannes H. Kramers (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1938), pp. 348-49; trans. Johannes H. Kramers and Gaston Wiet, *Configuration de la Terre par Ibn Hauqal (Kitab Surat al-Ard)* (Beirut: Commission internationale pour la traduction des chefs-d'oeuvre, 1964), p. 342. While the author is clearly focused on urban populations rather than the population as a whole, the stress on Persian rather than Arabic is striking and would, one suspects, have had an influence upon the indigenous Armenian population.

⁴² Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 172; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, p. 27.

Stephen, literally mother-city or capital.⁴³ This may perhaps be a reminder of its recent prominence in the reign of Abas I; it would seem inappropriate to use it after his death in 952/53. Ani is first mentioned by Stephen of Taron when reporting a church synod convened there during the reign of Ashot III, and again this is the first occasion on which it is called a city.⁴⁴ The two phases of construction of the walls of Ani beyond the citadel, first under Ashot III and then under Smbat II, are recorded by Stephen.⁴⁵ This double expansion indicates a rapid development of the site, at least from the middle of the tenth century. Clearly, these changes had nothing to do with seeking to improve the strategic potential of Ani because they resulted in an increase in the length of wall to be held, making the site harder to defend. These changes can only reflect a dramatic increase in the size of the city's population. They also indicate that successive Bagratuni kings realized that it was in their interests to protect the whole city.

Secondly, although the separation of the kingdoms of Ani and Kars was perpetuated across three generations after 961, it is far from clear that this was the intention of the original parties or their descendents. Both branches harbored ambitions of reuniting the divided Bagratuni territories. After his accession to the throne in 977, Smbat II attacked his uncle Mushegh and captured a fortress, although the intervention of David *curopalate* of Tayk on the side of Mushegh compelled him to relinquish it.⁴⁶ In turn, Mushegh stirred up trouble for Smbat from the Sallarid emir of Dvin, although again this ultimately proved fruitless. If Mushegh and his son Abas had not proved to be resourceful and capable leaders, the division of the two would not have been sustained.

Transfer and Continuity of Settlement

As noted, four successive Bagratuni kings chose to develop four different sites rather than reusing or expanding the settlements associated

⁴³ Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 196; Macler *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, p. 67.

⁴⁴ Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 181; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, p. 41.

⁴⁵ Garsoïan, "Independent Kingdoms," p. 179. For the expansion under Smbat II, see Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 187; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, p. 49.

⁴⁶ Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 188; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, p. 50.

with their predecessors. Ashot I embellished Bagaran; Smbat I preferred Erazgavork/Shirakavan; Abas I developed Kars; Ashot III expanded Ani. Thereafter however Ani remained the principal center of the Bagratuni kingdom, its walls being rebuilt again during the reign of Smbat II (977-89/90) and the city was further embellished by Gagik I (989/90-1020), his queen Katranide and others. How are these patterns, firstly of movement between sites, and then stasis, to be explained? Why is there a progression from the first to the second in the middle of the tenth century? At one level, the selection of a new site avoided any comparison, overt or otherwise, with the foundations of one's predecessors. A new location required a new church through which the founder could hope to gain God's forgiveness for his own sins and those of his immediate family. This may supply a complete explanation for the movement from place to place. In passing, it is intriguing to observe that such foundations were deemed to be a subject worthy of inclusion by successive Armenian writers. If nothing else is recorded about a particular prince or king, there is often information about the churches he founded, probably because such foundations had an obvious resonance with the Old Testament account of the building of the Temple by Solomon.⁴⁷ In other words, church foundation fitted into the biblical profile of kingship and was perceived to be one of the responsibilities of political leadership. The frequent proximity of royal palace to church, as reported by John Catholicos, may also be understood in terms of the actions of Solomon since he also constructed a palace for himself in Jerusalem.⁴⁸ In any event, one should not forget that such foundations had a contemporary architectural context that included secular structures, even if today the churches tend to stand, and are studied, in isolation.

There is a second explanation, however, for these repeated transfers, namely that they express something of the personal circumstances and contemporary pressures experienced by successive Bagratuni kings. As already noted, Smbat I had a prior interest in Shirakavan, presumably accorded to him by his father, and this justified his decision to settle there rather than Bagaran. While his defeat of Abas in 890 enabled Smbat to regain control of Kars, this recovery must be offset by his concession of direct control over Bagaran to his brother Shapuh and then to his nephew Ashot, in an attempt to secure their

⁴⁷ 1 Kings 5-6.

⁴⁸ 1 Kings 7:1-12.

loyalty. Both were honored as *sparapet* of Armenia, a title that by this date was probably honorific and indicated a second ranking after the king.⁴⁹ In regaining Kars, Smbat was forced to relinquish Bagaran. One might conjecture that through this grant, Smbat also hoped to gain security on his southern flank against attack up the Araxes valley through the Arab salient at Dvin. In any event, this concession of territory based around a single established center on the periphery of Bagratuni domains looks remarkably similar to Ashot III's subsequent grant of Kars and its associated districts to Mushegh. The only difference is that Mushegh was awarded the title of king whereas Shapuh had to settle for *sparapet*. It is likely that this difference is simply a reflection of the incorporation of the royal title within the hierarchy of Armenian social terminology by the middle of the tenth century. The title king was rapidly appropriated by all the major Armenian princely houses. Its proliferation does not reflect fundamental constitutional or institutional development within Armenia but rather the tendency of Armenian princely houses to absorb new titles and honors and apply them for their own purposes. Therefore the concession by Ashot III of Kars to Mushegh, and of Tashir to his younger son Gurgen, possibly in 972, is wholly consistent with the earlier pattern of concession of outer lands to close family members.⁵⁰ The only difference is the application of the title "king."

⁴⁹ The title *sparapet* had obtained a very different meaning by the end of the ninth century. In much the same way, it may be argued that *marzpan* came to represent the third-ranked member of the family. The survival of such antique titles from the Sasanian era does not necessarily entail the survival of their original military or administrative responsibilities. The reuse of the title "prince of princes" at the beginning of the eleventh century within the Pahlavuni family attests to a similar retention of form and transformation of meaning. See the inscription of Prince of Princes Vahram at Marmashen, dated 1029, as published by Ghevond Alishan, *Shirak* (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1881), p. 148.

⁵⁰ There is uncertainty over when Gurgen was granted Tashir. Matthew of Edessa described him as "king of Albania" in an entry dated 972, and he participated at the assembly of Hark in 974. See Matthew of Edessa, *Patmutiun*, p. 20; Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades*, p. 27. Both notices, however, derive from the notoriously muddled opening section of Book 1 of Matthew's *History*. Gurgen (or Kiwrike) is also named as king (*tagavor*) alongside his brother Smbat on the inscription located in the frame above the donor's relief on the Amenaprkich church in the monastery of Sanahin. This was completed between 966 and 972. On the other hand, the late thirteenth-century historian Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi indicates that Gurgen was not proclaimed king until 980, in which case he was appointed by his brother Smbat II (977-89). See Garsoïan and Thierry, "L'indépendance retrouvée," pp. 252-253, 271. The

It is perhaps a reflection of the desperate struggle in which Ashot Erkat was engaged that it is not certain where his principal stronghold was, although there is a passage stating that on one occasion he took refuge on the island of Sevan, hinting once more at his "eastern" ambitions. His brother Abas had no hesitation in transferring to Kars, if indeed he had not already obtained an interest in the site, whether through his brother Ashot Erkat or at his own initiative.⁵¹ This had been one of the principal defensive bases used by his father Smbat I and it is logical that it was selected for similar reasons of security. It was located further west than Shirakavan, well away from the main Araxes valley corridor running through the heart of Armenia and also off the northern invasion route through Tashir that had been used in the recent past by Sadjid emirs to attack Smbat I. As such, it would fit neatly into the pattern of historic Armenian princely settlement in Vanand, Shirak, and Aragatsotn. Traditionally, the Araxes valley was one of the principal targets within Armenia for control by outside powers as it provided a strategic corridor connecting the Anatolian, Armenian, and Iranian plateaus. Hence, Karin at the headwaters of the Araxes River was first a Byzantine and then an Arab base, while Dvin was first Persian and then Arab controlled. Nakhichevan, too, became the center of an Arab emirate. Armenian princes were rarely powerful enough to dominate the valley for any length of time; hence they tended to settle in fertile but slightly more remote regions, one of which lay to the north of the Araxes River in the districts of Shirak, Arsharunik, and Vanand, to the west of Mount Aragats. This retreat by Abas to Kars may also symbolize a temporary contraction in the political power of this branch of the Bagratuni family, as Ashot Erkat and Abas sought to reestablish their authority after the execution of their father Smbat I. While glorious from a Christian point of view when portrayed as martyrdom, Smbat's violent death must have represented a severe reverse to the reputation of the Bagratuni family, from which it took at least a generation to recover. The lengthy and unresolved confrontation between the two Ashots should therefore be understood in terms of one branch of the Bagratuni family seeking to replace another. Finally, one should not ignore the threat of invasion or interven-

epigraphic evidence strongly suggests that Gurgen was elevated by his father Ashot III and that Mkhitar's notice is either misdated or a record of confirmation of Gurgen's appointment by Smbat II, which would constitute a significant development in its own right.

⁵¹ See above, note 32.

tion within Armenia by Arab ostikans and emirs from both south and east, a threat which persisted throughout the first half of the tenth century. The grim experience of Smbat and others would have loomed large in the memories of all the princely families. It is mentioned in all the contemporary historical works, even in Movses Kaghankatuatsi's *History of Caucasian Albania*.⁵² Contemporary Armenian kings and princes were not to know that after 920, the Islamic world was entering a long period of introspection and internal disorder. This atmosphere may have influenced Abas' choice of Kars—further north and west than the other centers.

By the same token, the switch to Ani may also express another change in the fortunes of the Bagratuni family, this time to counter an anticipated threat from the west. Ani was both closer to the heart of Bagratuni territory, further east of the active Byzantine frontier and some way away from those districts in Tayk and Klarjeti held by distant Bagratuni relatives. Several of these had acquired significant additional territories in Basean (Basen) after the Byzantine capture of Karin in 949.⁵³ Thus, it is possible that the potential threat from the northwest and west influenced Ashot III's choice of Ani. The grant of Kars to Mushegh should perhaps be interpreted in terms of creating a useful defensive buffer for Ani against Byzantine and Iberian territorial ambitions, in much the same way that Smbat I had conceded Bagaran, first to his brother Shapuh and then his nephew Ashot.

Having sought to explain the changes in the course of the first half of the tenth century, it is also necessary to examine why Ani remained the effective capital for Ashot III, Smbat II, and their successors into the middle of the eleventh century. It has already been observed that Ani expanded rapidly during the reign of Smbat II, so much so that he was compelled to build a new circuit wall on the exposed side of the triangular site, one that enclosed perhaps as much as three times the area as the wall constructed by his father Ashot III. As argued previously, this cannot be explained in terms of defensive strategy and can only reflect a great increase in the number of people wanting to live and work there. This marks a notable departure from the earlier tradition of substantial urban centers within Armenia being under non-Armenian con-

⁵² Varag Arakelyan, ed., *Movses Kaghankatuatsi: Patmutiun Aghvanits Ashkharhi* (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1983); trans. Charles J.F. Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranci* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

⁵³ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ch. 45, lines 156-75.

trol, such as Dvin, Manzikert, and Karin.⁵⁴ The contemporary geopolitical situation in the Near East undoubtedly had something to do with this sudden expansion. After the fall of Karin in 949, Byzantine ambitions turned south to neutralize the threat posed by the Hamdanid emirs of Aleppo. Thereafter, the northern districts of Armenia lay outside the active theaters of warfare. The move to Ani and the subsequent development of the city seem to coincide with a new security from attack or interference by imperial, caliphal or regional forces. It also seems to be connected to the gradual eclipse of the city of Dvin. At the end of the tenth century, the Arab geographer al-Muqaddasi noted that the population of Dabil/Dvin "has declined and its fortress gone to ruin."⁵⁵ The reason for this decline is hard to explain but it is possible that repeated military actions in and around the city prompted the merchants and artisans to move to another, more secure site. In 982, the emir of Goghtn captured Dvin from the Sallarids, but he then lost the city to the new Kurdish Rawwadid house in 987 before retaking it once more two years later.⁵⁶ This political volatility could explain both the reduction in population and the destruction of the fortress. Moreover, Stephen of Taron records that Smbat II was closely involved in these events and that he harbored ambitions of seizing Dvin for himself, by treachery if need be.⁵⁷ These events could explain the need for a second expansion of the city walls under Smbat II. But what of the initial expansion under Ashot III? In this respect, it may be significant that Ani now lay outside direct caliphal control or even influence. Al-Muqaddasi's list of the cities of Arminiya does not include Ani, even though he is able to report that one of the gates of Dabil/Dvin was called Bab Ani, attesting the importance of that destination.⁵⁸ Could it be that by virtue of its liminal location, poised between Byzantium and Islam, as well as its independent status, Ani enjoyed certain commercial—and possibly fiscal—advantages over Dvin which encouraged merchants and traders to move there? Or did the Byzantine annexation of Taron in 966 and the sack of Manzikert in 968 prompt those who

⁵⁴ Garsoïan, "Independent Kingdoms," p. 181.

⁵⁵ Al Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Ta'asim fi Marifat al-Aqalim*, ed. Michael J. de Goeje (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1877; rev. 1906), p. 377; trans. Basil A. Collins, *Al Muqaddasi. The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions* (Reading: Garnet, 1994), p. 333.

⁵⁶ Garsoïan, "Independent Kingdoms," p. 167.

⁵⁷ Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, pp. 188-89, 198-201; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, pp. 51-55, 71-73.

⁵⁸ Al Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Ta'asim*, p. 377; Collins, *Al Muqaddasi*, p. 333.

wished to conduct their business beyond the reach of the imperial administration to relocate to Ani? Until these sites are excavated afresh, their individual chronologies and relationships to one another will remain largely conjectural. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a broad correlation between the fortunes of these urban centers, one apparently dictated by commercial considerations, with Ani emerging as the preferred location from the middle of the tenth century.

Ani remained the capital for successive Bagratuni kings because it developed into a wealthy urban center, and it was in their interest to keep direct control and profit from it. The basis of that wealth is an issue that has yet to be resolved, although Manandian argued that both Ani and Kars lay on the principal trade route through Armenia.⁵⁹ In this respect, Ani may usefully be compared with the city of Ardanudj in Iberia in the 920s. It is described in a Greek source in the following terms: "The *kastron* of Ardanudj is very strongly defended, and has moreover a considerable suburban area like a provincial city and the commerce of Trapezus and Iberia and Abasgia and from the whole country of Armenia and Syria comes to it and the customs revenue from this commerce is enormous."⁶⁰ Arguably this description could equally be applied to Ani in the second half of the tenth century, and that customs receipts and other commercial impositions became the principal sources of revenue for the later Bagratuni kings—hence their determination to keep control of Ani. The independent status of Ardanudj provides another parallel with Ani in that it was held directly by Iberian princes rather than the Byzantine Empire, despite its best efforts, or an Arab emirate.⁶¹

It is possible to gain some idea of the scale of the wealth available to Ashot III and his successors, however imperfectly, in two ways. First, an Arabic geographer, Ibn Hawqal, has preserved a list of ten tributaries of the Sallarid emir Marzuban in 955.⁶² Four of these were

⁵⁹ Hakob Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, trans. and ed. Nina G. Garsoïan (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1965), p. 145: "Ani became one of the strongest cities in Armenia and at the same time a center of international transit trade."

⁶⁰ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ch. 46, lines 42-48.

⁶¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ch 6, records the failed attempt by Romanus Lecapenus to take over the site.

⁶² Ibn Hawqal, pp. 354-55; Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la Terre*, pp. 347-48. English trans. Vladimir F. Minorsky, "Caucasica IV," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies XV* (1953): 519-20.

Armenian, including “the descendants of Sunbat,” who were required to pay for their districts of Armenia Interior 2,000,000 dirhems; they were later remitted 200,000 dirhems on compassionate grounds. This figure is ten times the amount claimed from any other Armenian prince and twice that claimed from any other power in the Caucasus. It is unclear whether this sum, or anything approaching it, was ever actually collected on behalf of Marzuban, especially as he died two years later. But the scale of the demand in itself is extraordinary and implies considerable financial resources. Moreover, after Emir Marzuban’s death in 957, it seems that payments were not remitted to Arab emirs other than in exceptional circumstances.⁶³ Therefore the money was retained for use by successive Armenian shahanshahs. Although doubt has been expressed about the date traditionally ascribed to the coronation of King Ashot III in Ani (961), this year would neatly dovetail with the death of Marzuban and the temporary eclipse of the Sallarid emirate.⁶⁴

The second way to gain insight into the scale and the nature of the wealth available to successive Bagratuni kings is through the study of inscriptions, both those asserting responsibility for new foundations, and those on existing structures recording a secondary donation or concession. There is an unfortunate dearth of inscriptions recording foundations and donations by any member of the Bagratuni house between the early years of the tenth century and 971. As discussed previously, however, the contemporary historical texts reveal that King Smbat I sponsored a church at Erazgavork/Shirakavan, that Ashot Sparapet founded churches at Bagaran and Koghb, and that Abas was responsible for the Church of the Holy Apostles at Kars. Clearly, these figures possessed the financial resources to undertake such projects. It is only after 956, however, that inscriptions begin to reappear on existing churches and these tend to record the grant of specific property by individuals who were not members of the Bagratuni house.⁶⁵ The first inscription associated with the royal house is that of Queen Khawsre-

⁶³ Such an exceptional circumstance was the capture of Dvin by the Rawwadiid emir of Atrpatakan in 987, prompting Smbat II to remit taxes to him. See Stepanos Taronetsi, *Patmutiun Tiezerakan*, p. 199; Macler, *Etienne Asolik de Taron*, p. 71.

⁶⁴ See above, note 35.

⁶⁵ See, for example, the inscription at Bagaran referring to the gift of “uncultivated land” to the cathedral: Alishan, *Ayrarat*, p. 67; and the inscription dated 986 and carved onto the Church of St. Minas in Ani, recording the donation by Chutas of his ancestral vineyard at Mren to the monastery of Horomos for the sake of the souls of his parents: Alishan, *Shirak*, p. 32.

vaniwsh/Khosrovanush at Tekor in 971, when she is recorded as certifying the *shariat* of Tekor.⁶⁶ This refers to a named imposition collected from the church and as such represents an important starting point. Where the nature of the bequest is specified, subsequent royal inscriptions refer without exception to the exemption of tax or some other financial imposition or service. In other words, these inscriptions indicate that the Bagratuni kings had complete control of the fiscal prerogatives then operating within their territories and their bequests were in the first instance exemptions or remissions rather than permanent alienations of property. It is significant that church property was not exempt from such impositions. These inscriptions therefore provide invaluable insight into the various fiscal mechanisms and labor services then operating within the Bagratuni kingdom, subjects which the literary sources do not consider and for which no documentary records survive. There is one further development, dating from the last decade of the tenth century. An inscription of 994 on the Church of Saint Grigor Pahlavuni in Ani, known as Apughamrents, refers to the grant of shops, *kughpaks*, by Shushan, lady of ladies and wife of Prince Grigor Pahlavuni.⁶⁷ Subsequent eleventh-century Pahlavuni inscriptions in Ani also refer to the grant of shops. This is an important departure, providing solid evidence for market-exchange in Ani and participation in that activity by members of the Pahlavuni house as holders of commercial property within the city.

Conclusions

Three principal contentions emerge from this paper. First, the emergence of the kingdom of Kars should be viewed in the context of intra-family rivalry; it is not a constitutional development but rather a continuation of the pattern of earlier concessions made to close family members. For John Catholicos, kingship was singular and unique—and so he blamed contemporary troubles on the division of the kingship. However by the second half of the tenth century, there was at least one king in every princely Armenian house and the title had been absorbed into the Armenian social hierarchy. Indeed, within the Bagratuni line, it looks as though it was used as a term to designate headship over a particular region, with the title of shahanshah now reserved

⁶⁶ Alishan, *Shirak*, p. 133.

⁶⁷ Orbeli, *Divan hay vimagrutyan*, vol. 1, no. 94, pl. XI.

for the senior king in Ani. Second, both Kars and Ani were important fortresses at the start of the tenth century. Their subsequent rise to prominence owed much to the political and military pressures brought to bear upon successive Bagratuni kings and their attempts to mitigate or deflect these pressures. They were not historic centers of royalty, but neither were they in any sense random choices. Third, Ani developed rapidly into an urban center from the middle of the tenth century, although for reasons and in circumstances that are not altogether clear. This process of expansion accelerated under Smbat II and should be associated with the simultaneous demise of Dvin. The ability of successive Bagratuni kings to tap this wealth through financial impositions goes a long way to understanding why Ani became and remained the capital of the kingdom of Armenia.



Baginayr: Monastery, Early 20th and 21st Centuries